



VITEMA

Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency

Annual Report

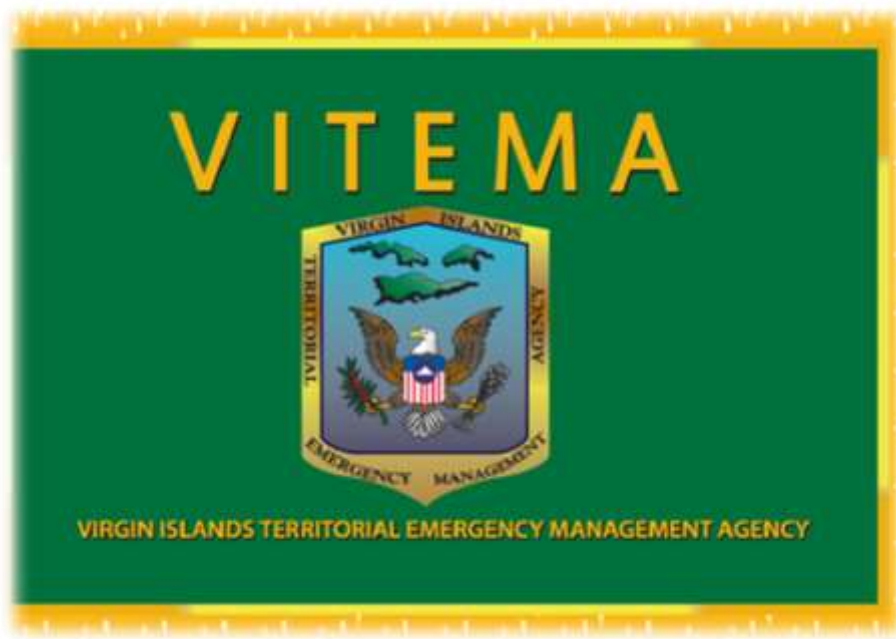
2014



VI-ALERT

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The official flag of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) was adopted in September 2011. It displays a combined version of the Great Seal of the United States Virgin Islands and the seal of VITEMA.

The eagle holds a laurel branch in one talon representing VITEMA's mission to save lives and protect property from natural and man-made disasters through a high state of readiness. The arrows in the other talon represents VITEMA's steadfast vision for the Virgin Islands to become the premier leader of emergency management in the Caribbean and the Nation by providing an effective and professional network of services to ensure resiliency before, during, and after a natural or man-made incident.

The red and white stripes, encapsulated by a blue border, symbolize the charges of VITEMA – homeland security, 911 emergency operations, and emergency preparedness and response. The flag's colors of green and gold symbolize the resilience and unity of VITEMA through oneness of mind and unity of effort.



OUR MISSION

The principal mission of VITEMA, as the lead emergency response coordinator, is to save lives and protect property by preparing territorial organizations to respond to, recover from and to mitigate all hazards, through planning, coordinating, and training and exercise activities. VITEMA is the sole Virgin Islands government agency designated to supervise, administer and coordinate an all hazards response and recovery operation.

OUR VISION

To be the premier emergency management agency in the Caribbean and the Nation by providing an effective, responsible, and professional network of services to ensure resiliency before, during, and after a natural or man-made incident that may impact the safety and well-being of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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VITEMA

VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
ST. CROIX | ST. JOHN | ST. THOMAS | WATER ISLAND

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



During the last four years, the Virgin Islands were fortunate not to have had any catastrophic events, unlike other areas of the Caribbean region. The Virgin Islands, like other parts of the Caribbean region face a rapidly changing emergency/disaster management environment with regards to its ability to prepare, recover, and respond to any catastrophic event. Therefore, we need to reposition our focus on the strategic challenges and opportunities that will define emergency/disaster management from a Caribbean perspective: new technologies, trained and qualified personnel, best practices, and areas of weather, climate change, cyber security and all hazards disasters that are growing more volatile and more unpredictable.

The key to success in this region is in part resiliency and self-sufficiency. In order to attain these, we need to boldly address changing strategic environments and attitudes and rely on our many regional island nations, comparative advantages, network of alliances and quality human capital. All this will help shape, prepare, and posture VITEMA for success.

Given the Virgin Islands Government's fiscal condition, the Agency is also facing a changing and equally uncertain fiscal environment; both at the federal grant assistance and local government level. Beginning with the cut in our fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget appropriations and reduction in federal grants assistance, there are simply no more discretionary funds.

It is imperative that VITEMA work closely with the Legislative and the Executive branches of government to ensure that as we put VITEMA's fiscal house in order, we provide sufficient resources to train, prepare, mitigate and respond to all-hazard disasters to save lives and safeguard property.

Resiliency and Self Sufficiency

VITEMA stands ready to work in partnership locally, regionally, and globally. It is only through continuous dialogue and interagency cooperation and coordination that we can hope to make the transition necessary to ensure that this agency can continue to transform into the preeminent emergency management agency in the Caribbean.

There remains a lot of work to be done... continue to make it happen!

BG (Ret) Elton Lewis, CEM, MCP
Director



NOAA Designates the US Virgin Islands as Tsunami Ready

Despite tremendous fiscal and human resource challenges, VITEMA reached significant milestones during 2014. Attaining Tsunami ready status is among those noteworthy achievements. On April 22, 2014, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) officially recognized the US Virgin Islands — St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas and Water Island—, as a Tsunami Ready community, adding the territory to the list of 174 jurisdictions with this designation. The USVI joins communities across several US coastline states, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Hawaii and the Northern Mariana Islands. The distinction is bestowed on jurisdictions that have met a number of requirements, including establishing a 24-hour focal point to receive warnings, multiple methods of disseminating warning information, robust communications capabilities, the creation of a tsunami response plan and more. The recognition is valid for three years.

An official ceremony was held May 13th, on St. Thomas during the opening session of the UNESCO tsunami system coordinating conference. During the ceremony, NOAA representatives presented Governor John P. de Jongh Jr. with the official Tsunami Ready signage to be installed at VI ports and decals to be placed on VITEMA's emergency response vehicles.

The recognition culminated VITEMA's efforts to build a viable VI Tsunami Readiness Program.



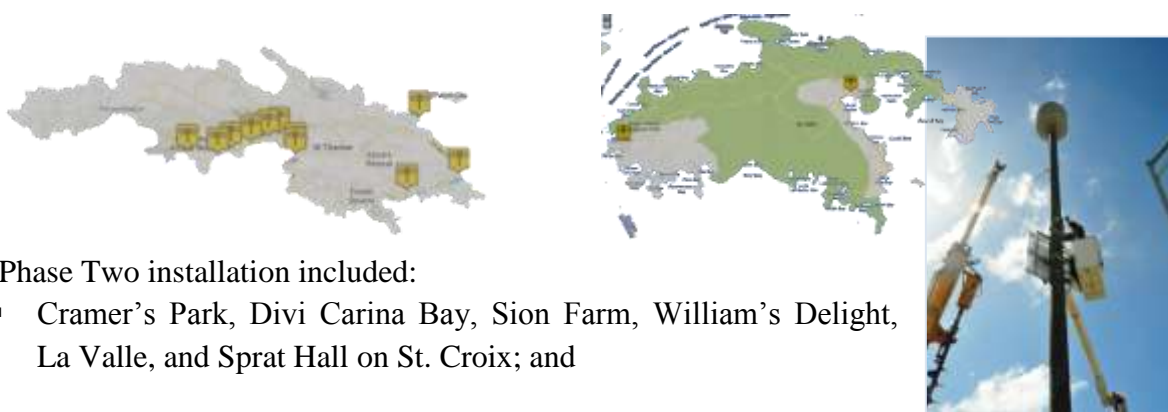
Figure 1 Tsunami Ready ceremony held May 2014 during the 9th Session of the UNESCO IOC ICG on St. Thomas.

Additionally, VITEMA and Office of the Governor unveiled the first-ever US Virgin Islands Tsunami Evacuation Maps for the islands of St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas. The tsunami evacuation maps delineate coastline inundation in the event of the Territory is impacted by a tsunami, as well as safe areas, evacuation route directional arrows, and assembly points. The maps also denote public schools and other government facilities situated within the inundation area and are available in English and Spanish online at VITEMA's website. With this tool, residents and businesses are now armed with information to better develop their disaster readiness plans for tsunamis. To define the tsunami evacuation zones, NOAA and the Puerto Seismic Network used an 82-foot elevation profile based on historical events, tsunami modeling

results from Puerto Rico and the BVI, and the US National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program guidelines. The 82-foot elevation was reached within 2 miles of our coastlines. Throughout 2014, VITEMA delivered the evacuation maps to government and non-government entities including schools within the tsunami evacuation zone.

Fourteen New Tsunami Sirens Installed

Boosting the USVI's public warning capabilities for no-notice events and other hazards, during 2014, VITEMA installed 14 new tsunami sirens as part of Phase II of the siren installation project. Ten sirens were installed at sites on St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas in 2012.



The Phase Two installation included:

- Cramer's Park, Divi Carina Bay, Sion Farm, William's Delight, La Valle, and Sprat Hall on St. Croix; and
- Crown Bay, Baa Library, Fort Christian, Long Bay (vicinity of Lucinda Millin Home), Magen's Bay, Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, Coki Point Beach and Independent Marina & Boat Yard at Benner Bay on St. Thomas.

Figure 2 Tsunami Siren

Today, 24 warning sirens are operable, online and communities of property. With place and the Warning System, capabilities are



capable of warning various an imminent threat to life and the VI Alert mass alert system in installation of an All-Hazards VTEMA's warning and notification far more advanced than it was a decade ago.

During the annual tsunami exercise held in March of this year, the Agency conducted a territorywide operational test of the tsunami siren system. All sirens operated optimally. Lessons learned from the exercise include the need for enhanced public education on what areas would be impacted by a tsunami and about the use of the early warning siren system.

Tsunami education and awareness is a continuous endeavor and has been set as one of the highest priorities in the Tsunami Readiness Program. Throughout the year, tsunami awareness courses and presentations were held for the public and private sectors, non-profit organizations and various communities. More than 1,000 residents have taken the eight-hour course. Additionally, VITEMA specifically targeted the USVI boating community, working with the NOAA's Caribbean Tsunami Warning Program and the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation

Program to bring experts to the territory for Maritime Community Tsunami workshops on St. Thomas and St. Croix. Scientists and emergency managers collaborated on the workshop's format including; Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade, Manager of NOAA's Caribbean Tsunami Warning Program, Roy Watlington, retired UVI professor and oceanographer, Prof. Aurelio Mercado of the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, and Dr. Patrick Lynett of the University of Southern California and an expert in tsunami impact on ports and harbors. The workshop discussions addressed the impact of tsunamis on boats, vessels and port infrastructure, as well as expected wave heights and currents, safe water depth and distance from shore within the context of the territory's tsunami warning system.



Figure 3 VI Scientist, Prof. Roy Watlington, instructs a tsunami awareness course at VITEMA-St. Croix.

VITEMA also entered a tsunami float in this year's Carnival Adult Parade and sponsored a tsunami simulation model contest for junior high school students.



Figure 4 VITEMA Director Elton Lewis presents an award to D' Shamo Greaves, of All Saints School, winner of the Tsunami Model Contest.

In May 2014, the Territory hosted the 9th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's coordinating group for tsunamis and other coastal warning systems.

More than 50 scientists and emergency managers attended to continue their work in building a Caribbean Tsunami System representing countries such as Columbia, Venezuela, Haiti, Mexico, France, Guadeloupe, Barbados, Trinidad and the United Kingdom.

The USVI's involvement in this critical organization points to the collective effort of both the executive and legislative branches of government to prepare and to build resiliency for major events.



Figure 5 The 9th Session-UNESCO IOC ICG CARIBE EWS was held May 13 – 15, 2014, at the Sugar Bay Resort on St. Thomas.

As part of the preparedness mission, VITEMA must also develop and exercise the Territorial Emergency Operations Plan (TEOP), as well as monitor its implementation. It is critical that emergency responders and managers train and exercise to identify and address critical gaps and weaknesses.

Urban Search & Rescue Task Force Created

A major accomplishment in 2014 was the establishment of a Virgin Islands Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. The

force is comprised of 12 firefighters and four rescue personnel who will specialize in rapid deployment for urban search and rescue or extrication and initial medical stabilization missions. The USVI continues to mirror trends across the US mainland. Search and rescue task forces have been established in many states across the US as well as at the federal level. Urban

search and rescue is considered a multi-hazard discipline because it's needed in all types of disasters from earthquakes to hazardous materials releases.

Utilizing key grant funding, VITEMA purchased rescue equipment to facilitate training for task force personnel. Following the completion of a five-day Low Angle Rope Rescue Training course provided by VITEMA, members of the task force became certified technicians in Rope Rescue Operations. VITEMA also provided a Rope Handling at Operator Level course for all firefighters and rescue personnel.



Figure 6 St. Thomas and St. Croix firefighters and rescue personnel train in rope rescue operations and rope handling.

During Fiscal Year 2014, VITEMA continued to provide training for staff, police, firefighters, EMTs, Rescue personnel, educators, and medical personnel.

Courses held this fiscal year included:

- Law Enforcement Active Shooter Response
- Medical Management of CBRNe (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Yield Explosives) Training
- Law Enforcement Prevention and Deterrence of Terrorist Acts
- Disaster Preparedness for Community Infrastructure: Health & Hospital
- Transit Terrorist Tools & Tactics
- Incident Command System (ICS) 300 & 400 Level
- Public Information in an All-Hazard Incident
- and Introduction to Computer-Aided Management of Emergencies



Figure 7 Attendees of the Senior Officials Workshop for All-Hazards Preparedness MGT-312 at VITEMA Emergency Operations Center, St. Croix.



Figure 9 - Speakers of the Research-to-Practice Symposium held in June 2014 at UVI, St. Thomas.



Figure 8 - VITEMA Director Elton Lewis after a presentation to the Rotary Club Midland, St. Croix.

Exercises allow first responders and emergency managers to hone skills and test the readiness in a controlled environment. Throughout fiscal and calendar year 2014, VITEMA conducted joint exercises to include:

- Operation Tide Breaker III and IV, held December 2013 and December 2014 respectively, functional multi-hazard and maritime exercises that brought together local and federal agencies and the maritime industry to test intelligence-sharing, interoperable communications, and on-site incident management, particularly emergency triage and



Figure 10 Aboard cruise ship *Celebrity Reflection* during OTB III, VITEMA Director Elton Lewis, VING Strategic Planner LTC Kenneth Alleyne with the ship's Chief of Security.

pre-hospital treatment and medical evacuation capabilities. As part of the OTB III scenario, responders were challenged with managing a hazardous material incident onboard the cruise ship *Celebrity Reflection*. OTB IV tested first responder response to an infectious disease incident and a search and rescue event.

- CARIBE WAVE/LANTEX 14, a Caribbean and Northwestern Atlantic Tsunami Warning Exercise, held in March. As part of this tsunami exercise, VITEMA conducted a territorywide test of the tsunami siren system on St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas. Sirens were activated to transmit a tsunami warning message followed by a warning tone. In addition to triggering the tsunami siren warning system, the 911 centers exercised its notification procedure for alerting key government officials. The test validated that the tsunami warning sirens are operational and can seamlessly activate once triggered by the 911 Emergency Communications Center in the St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John districts.
- August Surge, a FEMA-driven exercise that simulated a Category 2 hurricane. On June 17, VITEMA tested its operational coordination, communication, public warning and information, and public and private resources and services. Emergency Operations Centers on St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John activated for the exercise.

On Oct. 24, VITEMA and several government agencies and non-government entities participated in the National Shake-Out Earthquake Drill by practicing the ‘drop, cover and hold’ moves to protect against bodily harm.

VITEMA Receives CERT Utility Trailers

Resilience in the face of disaster is only realized when the whole community is prepared. VITEMA's mandate is also to prepare the territory's citizens for all hazards and during 2014 the Agency worked diligently to bolster the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. CERT prepares citizens to assist in disaster response efforts when first responders are not available.

This year, VITEMA purchased two fully-equipped disaster response and medical surge capacity trailer to support CERT teams. The trailers contain back boards, bandages, splints, first aid kits, stretchers and night lights for full-range disaster response support.



Figure 11 CERT utility trailers designed to support community disaster response.

VITEMA also partnered with St. Croix Rescue, the Department of Health, and the VI Waste Management and the VI National Guard to offer disaster response training to its employees. The 20-hour course provides training on lifesaving skills with emphasis on decision-making and rescuer safety. Topics included disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, and concludes with a CERT Disaster Exercise. This year, VITEMA and St. Croix Rescue also certified a new group in the TEEN CERT program.



Figure 12 VING and VI Waste Management Authority employees receive 20 hours of CERT disaster response training.

In May, VITEMA hosted its annual All Hazards Preparedness Expos on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix to heighten awareness about disaster preparedness. Local and federal government, voluntary organizations and the private sector came together to share preparedness information with citizens.

VITEMA EXPO 2014 - ST. THOMAS - ST. JOHN



Top to Bottom, left to right:
IEKHS Marching Band, Rita Robles-
VITEMA, Akira Pickering Haynes of
Addelita Cancryn School, Elton Lewis-
VITEMA Director, Ernesto Morales-
National Weather Service, and
representatives of the American Red
Cross, Army Corp of Engineer, SkyMed,
VI WAPA, VI Labor Department, VI WMA,
Home Depot, St. Thomas Rescue.



Top to Bottom, left to right:
Expo 2014 Participants:
Department of Health, VI Water
& Power Authority, VI National
Guard Family Assistance Center,
Innovative, VI Waste
Management Authority, Home
Depot, Sea Chest, VI Human
Services Department, VI Fire
Service, Cost-U-Less. Not
pictured – Army Corp of
Engineers, National Weather
Service, VI Police Department, VI
Rescue, SkyMed, Vi Department
of Labor, American Red Cross.

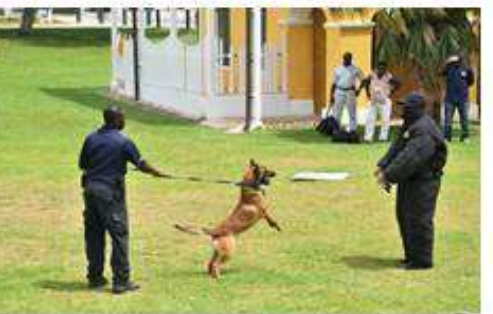




VITEMA EXPO 2014 - ST. CROIX



Top to bottom, left to right; Elton Lewis, VITEMA Director, US Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Corp of Engineers, Ernesto Morales, National Weather Service, CORE, VI Department of Health, VI National Guard, US Coast Guard, VI Fire Service, VI Waste Management Authority, Home Depot, Innovative, National Park Service, VI Department of Labor-OSHA, American Red Cross, St. Croix Rescue, VI Department of Planning & Natural Resources VING Family Assistance Program, CERT & Teen CERT.





Hazard Mitigation Plan Updated

Hazard mitigation also plays a major role in how well the Territory prepares for and recovers from disasters. This year, VITEMA updated the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan which identifies mitigation efforts that can be undertaken by both the public and private sectors to reduce damages caused by natural hazards. While these hazards are acts of nature, the impact on residents, public facilities, businesses, and private property can be diminished through hazard mitigation planning.

The 2014 update serves as a blueprint for future actions to reduce the devastating impact of natural disasters on our residents and property owners and commercial enterprises. The actions included reflect strategies that address hazards such as hurricanes, coastal and inland flooding, earthquakes, drought, wildfire, tsunamis and rain-induced landslides. The plan outlines recommended actions ranging from programmatic measures that seek to incorporate enhanced mitigation practices within the governmental agencies to specific actions that focus on implementing meaningful hazard mitigation projects for each island.

Completion of this plan also ensured that the Virgin Islands government remains eligible for FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation and hazard mitigation grants.

St. Croix Airport Assessed for Readiness to Support Disaster Response

In October, VITEMA and FEMA officials completed a site assessment of the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix to determine its readiness to support response operations during a disaster or emergency event. FEMA, working with the local government, determines which airports are suitable for air operations and what populations are at risk and suitable for air



evacuation, after a presidential disaster declaration. An operation of this kind, may involve air, ground, and maritime logistics coordination depending on the characteristics of the airport and its

surrounding area; supporting operations such as logistics including commodity distribution, medical support and search and rescue operations.

The St. Croix Airport Assessment was conducted to determine the capability to support various sizes of civilian and military-type aircraft, as well as the maximum amount and optimum mix of various size/type aircraft the airfield can accommodate in emergency response operations. Assessors also collected logistical information and data to determine the overall capabilities of facilities and equipment at the airfield and immediate surrounding area to support extensive emergency air operations.

The outcome of the assessment is to create an Air Operations Plan that can guide territorial agencies, as well as federal agencies in the emergency response and recovery operations after a major catastrophic disaster in the USVI. The previous assessment was conducted in 2011.

The Emergency Management Accreditation Program



Finally, this year VITEMA initiated efforts to become an accredited organization through the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP). EMAP is a standards-based voluntary assessment and accreditation process for government programs responsible for coordinating prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities for natural and human-caused disasters. Accreditation is based on compliance with collaboratively



Figure 13 Left to right; Mike Augustnyi, Jody Woodcock, VITEMA Director Elton Lewis and Karen Windon during an accreditation visit at VITEMA Headquarters in St. Thomas.

developed national standards, the Emergency Management Standard by EMAP. To achieve accreditation, emergency management programs document compliance with a set of industry recognized standards used in the accreditation process and undergo a peer-review assessment by EMAP trained assessors. The emergency management program uses the accreditation to prove the capabilities of their disaster preparedness and response systems. In July 2014, a team of trained accreditation assessors provided a baseline assessment of VITEMA, with eyes on full accreditation in 2015.

Emergency Operations Centers Exercise for Major Disasters, Centers Activate for Two Named Storms during the 2014 Hurricane Season

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) managers and emergency support function coordinators representing government agencies in the EOC trained and exercised year-round for a wide range of emergencies. This fiscal and calendar year, VITEMA EOCs also activated for Operation Tide Breaker III and IV, Caribe Wave/LANTEX14 and August Surge to test EOC operations.

EOCs managers and emergency support coordinators also prepared for the Atlantic Hurricane Season which runs from June 1st to November 30th.

In 2014, the EOCs activated in response to Tropical Storm Bertha which passed just south of the St. Croix on August 2nd, and for Hurricane Gonzalo, which threatened to pass directly over the island of St. Croix on October 14th before unexpectedly veering to the north.

For each event, VITEMA led the response coordination with local government agencies and with our federal counterparts at FEMA Region 2 and its Caribbean Area Division. FEMA deployed an Incident Management Assistance Team to support our efforts. The team was embedded at the St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John EOCs and worked alongside our EOC managers to prepare for a response effort. Bertha had minimal impact on the territory but the incident served as an opportunity for us to tweak our operational coordination internally and with our federal counterparts. Hurricane Ganzola produced minor rainfall across the territory.

VITEMA continued to fortify its communications equipment, and today, its EOCs are capable of communicating with each other and with any FEMA EOC in the country, including Mt. Weather, Virginia.



Figure 14 Tropical Storm Bertha passed south of St. Croix on Aug. 2, 2014.



Figure 15 Hurricane Gonzalo passed north of the USVI on Oct. 14, 2014.

911 Emergency Operations Center

The 911 Emergency Communications Centers on St. Thomas and St. Croix each fielded an average of 15,000 calls per month for emergency assistance — more than 350,000 calls per year requiring operators to dispatch first responders.

Operators continued to play a key role in managing small-scale incidents on a day-to-day basis including vehicular accidents, major crimes such as homicides, and calls for medical assistance.

The 911 ECCs also participated in annual exercises, testing the dispatch process and incident notification to the appropriate government officials. During *Caribe Wave/LANTEX14 tsunami exercise*, the districts' 911 centers successfully activated the All-Hazards Siren Warning System territorywide to test delivery of both the automatic and manual voice and tone, emergency alert messages. In addition to managing emergency calls, operators are responsible for monthly silent testing and triggering the siren warning system in the event of a major emergency such as an earthquake or tsunami. This year, VITEMA implemented an All-Hazards Siren Warning System Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which outlines the system's operations and training for ECC employees.



Figure 16 St. Thomas operators present at the Curious George School.

In April 2014, *National 9-1-1 Education Month*, the 911 ECCs continued its community outreach program to teach the student-age population about why and when to call 9-1-1. This program was launched in April 2012. Since then operators have partnered with first responders to conduct numerous 9-1-1 awareness presentations.

Virgin Islands Fusion Center

The mission of the Virgin Islands Fusion Center is to prevent and deter acts of terrorism and criminal activity within the U.S. Virgin Islands and to promote public safety through intelligence fusion and information sharing with all its law enforcement partners.



During 2014, the Virgin Islands Fusion Center:

- Created a viable territorially-owned but federally-supported

intelligence unit that has developed a strong network of Territorial, Federal and private sector partners in which information collection and dissemination is able to be developed and shared.

- Created threat assessments for special events in the Territory to be used by law enforcement and first responder community including the annual Carnival in St. Thomas. This includes a joint threat assessment with the FBI.
- Participated in daily intelligence reports from the U.S. Coast Guard and attended monthly Harbor Safety and Security meetings.
- With the support of the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Protective Security Advisor and DHS-trained National Guard teams, the Fusion Center has hosted Computer Based Assessment Tool (CBAT) visits to help various facilities strengthen their security posture and planning.
- Created an assessment addressing the rise of undocumented migrants entering St. John. Assessment was successfully used by Customs and Border Patrol Marine in the apprehension of migrants and received high scores from a member of the U.S. intelligence community.
- Completed the Virgin Islands Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for the USVI.
- 2 additional analysts received Ham radio licenses bringing the total to six licensed operators.
- Assisted the U.S. Marshal and VI Department of Justice Sexual Predator Task Force in locating three sexual predators of interest in the Territory.
- Supported requests for information (RFI) from local, federal and mainland fusion centers.
- Participated in *Operation Tide Breaker III* exercise in an internal intelligence function. Participants included the Fusion Center, VIPD, TSA and FBI.
- Hosted meeting by the National Maritime Intelligence Integration Office
- Hosted first meeting between the Virgin Islands Fusion Center and the Puerto Rico Police Department's FURA Intel and Marine Unit on intelligence sharing.

Trainings provided included:

- Prescription Drug Identification
- Principles of Intelligence Writing and Briefing
- eGuardian Training



Grants



Management



Grants Management

Through the Grants Management Division, VITEMA applies for, administers and monitors federal funding that facilitate the Territory's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural or manmade disasters. VITEMA manages grants for homeland security, preparedness, hazard mitigation and disaster public assistance.

During 2014, the Grants Management division completed the Federal Grants Administrative manual which is currently under review by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The division also successfully completed the FY 2013 A-133 Single Audit. There were no findings and VITEMA was found to be in compliance.

Additionally, throughout 2014, addressed corrective actions proposed by the DHS during grants compliance monitoring visits in 2010, 2012 and 2013. The manual drawdown process imposed by DHS continued to delay the drawdown of federal funds.

Public Assistance Reaches Final Closure on Declared Disasters

The Division also worked diligently throughout the year toward final closure of disasters that have impacted the Territory. The following disasters were closed in was 2014:

- Closure of FEMA-1503-DR-VI (November Flood 2003)
- Closure of FEMA-1567-DR-VI (Tropical Storm Jeanne, 2004)

Despite a significant effort to work with sub-grantees, the division continued to see delays in completing approved projects, submission of chart of accounts requests, submission of budget forms and/or submission of supporting cost documentation. To increase sub-grantee compliance with the terms of Public Assistance awards, the Division renewed its sub-recipient monitoring efforts to increase sub-grantee compliance and to increase drawdown of Federal funds.

Public Assistance Grant Program(PA)

	1807 Omar	1939 Earl	1948 Otto	1949 Tomas
Purpose	Restoration of public facilities due to damages from Hurricane Omar in 2008	Restoration of public facilities due to damages from Hurricane Earl in 2010	Restoration of public facilities due to damages from Tropical Storm Otto in 2010	Restoration of public facilities due to damages from Tropical Storm Tomas in 2010
Start Date	10/29/2008	9/28/2010	11/05/2010	11/24/2010
Close Date	Until expended	Until expended	Until expended	Until expended
Award Amount	\$8,544,786.72	\$2,278,761.07	\$890,975.91	\$1,894,179.27
Balance	\$2,260,219.74	\$2,502,074.78	\$890,975.91	\$916,984.52

Letters were sent to sub-grantees outlining issues resulting in delay of reimbursement including no chart of accounts requests, no budget forms submitted, no completion of awarded projects,

and/or no submission of supporting cost documents. Some sub-grantees have not responded to our requests to submit requested information and/or complete projects.

The Grants Management Division remained instrumental in securing grant awards that significantly boost VITEMA's readiness effort, including:

- National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program funding to:
 - Install additional tsunami evacuation signs
 - Install 14 new outdoor warning sirens between St. Thomas and St. Croix
 - Sponsor a youth tsunami simulation model contest territorywide
 - Design and build a tsunami float for the annual Carnival parade on St. Thomas
 - Print large-scale tsunami evacuation maps for schools located in the tsunami evacuation zone.
 - Conduct tsunami exercises and tsunami awareness training.
 - Produce a tsunami awareness Public Service Announcement and place tsunami awareness billboard advertising at key visible locations at the USVI airports.
- State Homeland Security Grant funding to:
 - Build the Citizens Corp-CERT program which empowers the community to be prepared for disasters.
 - Conduct exercises to test various core capabilities including on-site incident management, communications, pre-hospital triage, and response to a hazardous material incident.
 - Establish and train the Urban Search and Rescue Task Force.
 - Enhance the VI Fusion Center's information system.
- Earthquake Hazards Reduction State Assistance Program to conduct seismic safety inspections of critical infrastructure.



Logistics

Information Technology and Communications

The Logistics Division sought to increase the Agency's access to technological tools to improve its operations before and during disasters. Funding was secured for various improvements, including:

On St. Croix:

- to purchase eight computers for the St. Croix Emergency Operations Center. This is critical in ensuring emergency support coordinators can easily compile, assess and access data to make informed decisions during a disaster.
- Hand-held GPS locator to map numerous locations for planning purposes, including the location of tsunami signs and sirens as well as critical infrastructure and hazard mitigation sites.
- ID machine/printer to support VITEMA Curfew Pass program.
- Multi-function printers for the EOC and 9-1-1 centers.

On St. Thomas, VITEMA upgraded its communications apparatus and installed new equipment.

- Mutual Aid: Federal partner, FEMA, installed a new system to bridge all emergency management communications. This enables us to patch telephone, HF radio, video and the VI trunking system — all communications resources — to be linked on one network. This allows VITEMA to communicate with Federal partners across the country. VITEMA and FEMA have also created a communications redundancy with the installation of deployable satellite terminals.

Hermon Hill Facility Receives a Facelift

VITEMA's Hermon Hill facility on St. Croix remained a significant challenge in 2014. Funding has not been identified to overhaul the facility which is currently in poor condition and a source for vandalism. However, the Agency was able to partner with the Department of Public Works for a major cleanup and renovation of specified areas of the building. Projections are a major renovation in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.



Figure 18 - VITEMA Herman Hill Facility on St. Croix. (Photo taken March 2011.)



Figure 17 - Herman Hill Facility, rear of the building. (2013)

Local, Regional & Federal Partners

VITEMA Reaches Continuity of Operations Planning Milestone



Figure 19 Gov. John P. de Jongh, VITEMA Director Elton Lewis, Damon Penn of FEMA, and other team members meet to discuss the USVI Continuity of Operations Plan.

Throughout 2014, VITEMA worked in partnership with the Office of the Governor to begin developing a USVI Continuity of Operations Plan or COOP. A COOP provides guidance for executive departments and agencies on how to continue performing their primary mission-essential functions if the Territory is struck by a major disaster or catastrophe such as an earthquake or tsunami. A plan of this magnitude requires participation and input at the highest levels of government. Working closely with FEMA and other federal partners, VITEMA and the Office of the Governor made steady progress in this area over the last few years.

On Dec. 10, 2014, Governor John P. de Jongh Jr. signed the US Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency's (VITEMA) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The project includes continuity guidance to be utilized by department heads during an incident that may disrupt regular operations of vital government agencies. The COOP, which was a collaboration between National Continuity Programs (NCP), FEMA Region II and VITEMA, enables continuance of government's essential functions including life and property safeguarding. Lack of such a plan could leave a government inoperative.

The plan project started in February 2013, when FEMA COOP officials met with Governor de Jongh and key USVI Officials representing the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary government levels. During that meeting, the USVI Governor and VITEMA Director requested FEMA subject matter expertise on continuity that included plan development skills and training for their COOP plan working team.

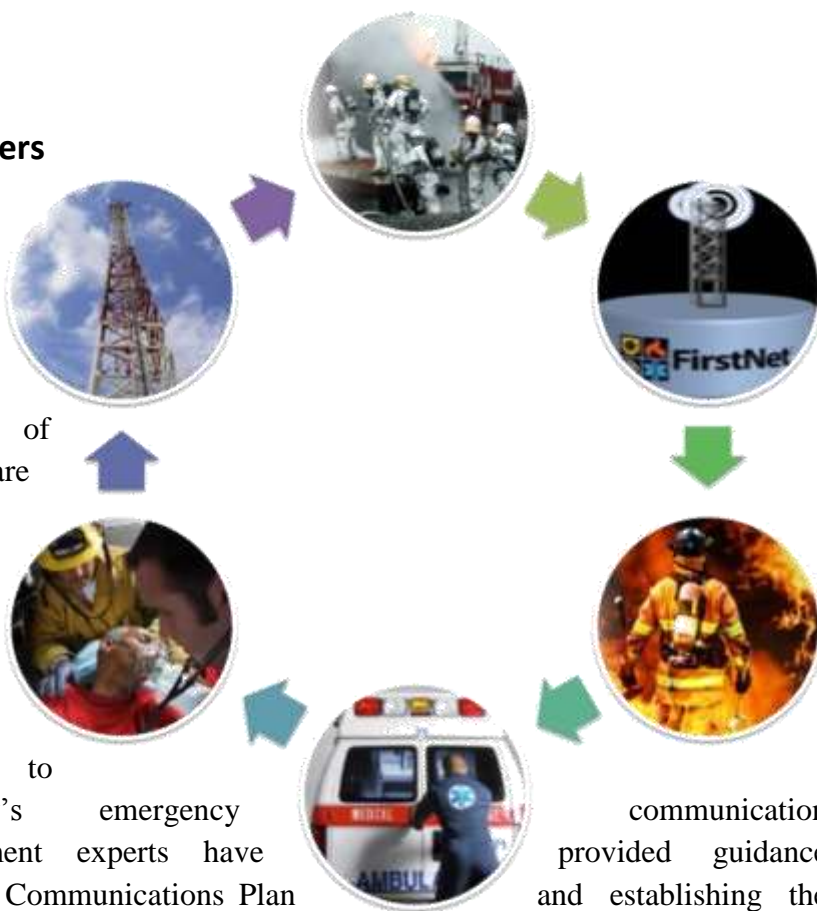
In July, 2014, a COOP team that included FEMA National Continuity Program (NCP HQ) staff, Region II and VITEMA personnel assigned to work with the Continuity Plan met and worked on the project. In September 2014, a second team arrived to USVI to continue working on the completion of the draft of the plan. The writing groups used the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Operations Plan (TEOP), the COOP Plan for the Caribbean Area Division and the Continuity of Operations Plan Template and Instructions for Non-Federal Governments as reference to complete this effort.

In December, VITEMA conducted the first-ever multiagency Earthquake/Tsunami Relocation COOP table-top exercise which will allow us to play out the relocation process during and after a continuity activation.

VITEMA Director Elton Lewis, FEMA Region II Administrator Jerome Hatfield, and FEMA CAD Director Alejandro De La Campa, joined Governor de Jongh for signing of the document.

VITEMA, BIT, Federal Partners Collaborate on Enhancing Communications Capabilities

VITEMA and the Bureau of Information Technology are continuously collaborating to enhance the Territory's communications capabilities to support first responders and disaster response. To streamline a multi-discipline, multi-jurisdictional effort to maintain the Territory's emergency capabilities, federal government experts have for creating an Interoperability Communications Plan governance structure to support it. It is in that light that VITEMA and BIT complied with and completed the Governor's executive order to establish a territorywide Communications Interoperability Governing Board. The board will direct the cooperative efforts of public safety/government interoperability.



Various program collaborations include:

- Text-to-9-1-1 service availability
- FirstNet which provide a network dedicated to public safety.
- Tower enhancement project
- Required coverage areas of the network
- Hardening, security, reliability, and resiliency requirements
- Assignment of priority users and selection of secondary users
- Training
- Availability of assets that may be utilized

US & British Virgin Islands Formalize an Inter-Island Council



The BVI
Virgin Islands
continues to



Building the Bridge to Partnership

The US and British Virgin Islands, for decades, have maintained a robust partnership due to their proximity and culture, particularly in the area of emergency management. In addition to that, there are close ties of kinship and fraternal relations among the residents of the territories extending over 200 years. This is a natural result of the proximity of the territories and similarities in the early patterns of development during the slavery and subsequent colonial era.

Department of Emergency Management and the US Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) collaborate on new ideas and best practices to support each island nation in the event of a catastrophe. This is done through the inter-Virgin Islands Council, established by the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Both territorial governments endorsed emergency management initiatives and continued to work to achieve the goal of a more detailed framework for cooperation.



*Visit of the new FEMA Region II Administrator – Jerome Hatfield
Office of the Governor- St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands*

Left to Right- Michael Bresnahan, FEMA Region II-Deputy Regional Administrator, VITEMA Director BG Elton Lewis, FEMA Region II-Regional Administrator Jerome Hatfield, Governor John P. de Jongh Jr., and FEMA Region II Caribbean Area Division Director Alejandro de La Campa. December 2013



Left to right: Alejandro De La Campa, Director, Caribbean Area Division DHS/FEMA Region II, BG Elton Lewis, VITEMA Director, Austin F. Callwood, VITEMA Assistant Director and Sonny F. Beauchamp, Operations Chief, DHS/FEMA Region II-CAD. 29 April 2014- San Juan, PR



Left to right; Steven Cooper, National Weather Service Acting Regional Director, Southern Region Headquarters; and Roberto Garcia, Manager of the National Weather Service, San Juan, visiting VITEMA Headquarters during a courtesy visit. Feb. 12, 2014, St. Thomas, VI



VITEMA and VING support the US Secret Service during Vice President Joe Biden and his family's Christmas vacation on St. Croix.



VITEMA Director Elton Lewis presents on tsunamis, warnings and public alerts, to Rotary Club, St. Thomas. More than 30 members attended.

2014 VITEMA Employee & Volunteer Highlights

Employees of the Year



Malinda Vigilant-Messer
Disaster Program Specialist
St. Croix



Shanavia Martin
911 Squad Leader
St. Croix



Linda Williams
Emergency Operations Center
Manager – St. John



Chanel Potter
911 Squad Leader
St. Thomas

Congratulations and thank you for a job well done!
- Team VITEMA



VITEMA Director Elton Lewis commends Denise Lewis, St. Croix Emergency Operations Center Supervisor for completion of a newly-developed Emergency Management Institute leadership course. Ms. Lewis received a Letter of Commendation and the Director's coin.



During a brief ceremony held on November 20th, VITEMA Facilities Manager Ethelbert Benjamin receives a certificate for completion of FNARS training.



Six Sigma graduate, Ms. Sheena Powell of VITEMA, is congratulated by VITEMA Director Elton Lewis, as Senator-Elect Novelle E. Francis Jr. looks on.



VITEMA Director Elton Lewis serves as guest speaker at the Six Sigma graduation ceremony held at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on Nov. 14, 2014.



VITEMA Director Elton Lewis offered his appreciation for the work of volunteers in support the Agency's mission. In a ceremony held Nov. 22, Director Lewis presented each volunteer a certification of appreciation and a few token gifts. From left to right, the volunteers are: Deshea Gonsalves, Lisa Kleber, Akeem Innis, Fred Kleber, Wes Tester, Bob Wakefield, Bernadette Benjamin, Geraldine Farrell and VITEMA Director Elton Lewis. Recipients not pictured: Dalis Walwyn (St. Thomas), John Gumbs, John Ellis, George Cline (St. John), Gilly Grimes (St. John) and Andi Vacharat (St. John).

2015 AGENDA

Leveraging federal grant dollars, our objectives for 2015 focus on closing gaps in strategic planning for catastrophic events; offering more dynamic training and exercise concepts for first responders, emergency managers and senior-level officials; and strengthening our communications capabilities. Our end goal is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the territory's emergency management system through whole-community engagement.

Among our top priorities is developing a Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster or VOAD Plan for non-government organizations such as the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services. The VOAD Plan will serve as a guide for local non-governmental organizations to work cohesively through open communication, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. This eliminates duplication of efforts and prevents services from being delivered haphazardly to disaster survivors. Working collaboratively, these organizations can combine resources to deliver services seamlessly to the public.

The National VOAD serves as a forum where the local organizations can share knowledge and resources throughout the Disaster Cycle. It also serves as the primary point of contact for voluntary organizations at the FEMA headquarters level.

In addition to crafting a VOAD Plan, the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Operations Plan will be updated and our work will continue in developing a USVI Continuity of Operations Plan or COOP. The COOP will provide guidance for executive departments and agencies on how to continue performing their primary mission-essential functions in the event the territory is struck by a major disaster or catastrophe such as an earthquake or tsunami. A plan of this magnitude requires participation and input at the highest levels of government. Working closely with FEMA and other federal partners, VITEMA and the Office of the Governor have made steady progress in this area over the last few years. In December, VITEMA will conduct the first-ever multiagency Earthquake/Tsunami Relocation COOP table-top exercise which will allow us to play out the relocation process during and after a 'continuity' activation.

In the upcoming fiscal year, US Department of Homeland Security grant funding will support our efforts to elevate training and exercises, to shore up the territory's communications capabilities and to make capital improvements to the VI Fusion Center, which serves as a focal point for intelligence-sharing.

Recognizing that our vulnerabilities to hazards are not only land-based but also waterborne, VITEMA will offer search and rescue training in a non-traditional marine environment. The goal is to develop a multi-disciplined force of responders. This training is in addition to law enforcement, counter-terrorism, medical operations, public information and active shooter courses planned for FY 2015, along with our annual tsunami, hurricane, and communications exercises.

In any disaster, establishing communication is among the most critical priorities for an effective response. During 2015, we will replace satellite dishes on our communications vehicles, ensuring

that VITEMA's communications capabilities are redundant, mobile and scalable to each event. In conjunction with the replacement of satellite dishes, VITEMA's communications vehicles are set to be upgraded with new radios compatible with our new trunking system.

Additionally, VITEMA and the Bureau of Information Technology are working jointly to execute the Radio Channel Equalization Project which will expand the number of radio channels available to first responders. The existing system features a limited number of channels and once a channel is engaged, it is locked until the talk group completes its communication. This leaves others queueing until a channel becomes available. This project will expand the number of channels available to our first responders and make it possible for other government departments and agencies to utilize the system, especially during major emergencies when communications play a critical role. The project is being funded through a federal homeland security grant and is projected to be complete by December 2015.

Through NOAA grant funds, VITEMA will continue to educate and prepare the community for all hazards, particularly no-notice events such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Our efforts will include community-oriented workshops and meetings. Included in this outreach is the distribution of the USVI tsunami evacuation maps which delineate evacuation and safe areas, and assembly points.

Finally, in July, VITEMA, working in conjunction with the VI Waste Management Authority and the VI Water and Power Authority, submitted three sub-grant applications for \$4.4 million in pre-disaster hazard mitigation federal grant funding.

The VI Waste Management's application requests approximately \$2.46 million for improvements to the LBJ Pump Station on St. Croix. If approved, the funding would allow Waste Management to relocate submerged sewer lines to better protect residents and businesses along the Christiansted town coastline. The project is aimed at reducing the amount of saltwater, sand, and debris entering the LBJ Pump Station, and preventing sewer line breaks caused by natural disaster.

WAPA is seeking \$1.6 million in pre-disaster hazard mitigation funding to continue its Christiansted Electrical Underground Project on Queen Street. With the inherent risk of damages caused by hurricanes and other natural disaster, this type of project helps protect the territory's economy. A second electrical underground sub-grant application requests \$333,200 to construct a direct line from the utility to VITEMA headquarters on St. Thomas. VITEMA serves as the hub for the local and federal emergency response and recovery efforts. This project ensures the facility is energized to support our pre-and-post disaster response and recovery mission.

These projects will be initiated during 2015.



VITEMA DIGITAL MEDIA

VITEMA utilizes multiple mediums to reach the public to provide valuable disaster and preparedness information.



VITEMA's Twitter channels offer brief updates to those looking for disaster preparedness and situational updates



Follow VITEMA to receives updates on current situation and preparedness tips through texts, pics and videos



Cell phone users with internet connectivity can access an easy-to-load VITEMA webpage (VI Alert) . Features info on what to do before, during and after a disaster, with the ability to apply for services



VITEMA's homepage is frequently updated to provide the most relevant and up-to-date information to the public. **www.VITEMA.gov**



Watch videos detailing VITEMA's response and preparedness efforts, along with topics such as tsunamis and how to prepare a disaster kit, what to do and where to go in an emergency and more.



The blog provides information before, during and after a disaster strikes, highlighting best practices and insights that are being used across emergency management and around the nation. Posted blogs are open to comments from the public.

**ELTON LEWIS, CEM, MCP
DIRECTOR**

**Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency/
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